

custom house MARITIMES

SUMMER 2014



Above: Detail 'Launching the Life- Boat,' by Granville Perkins. Wood-cut engraving, illustration from *Our Young Folks*, April 1869.

OKAY! Here's the story...

Everyone keeps asking about the striking lighthouse, shipwreck, life-saving scene installed at New London's Union Station, on loan from the Custom House Maritime Museum. In truth, for a long time we knew very little about it.

What we did know is that the 18-foot wide, maritime scene had been donated to the museum a couple of years ago under conditions of strict anonymity and without any documentation. Too big for any wall at the Custom House, we offered it to Todd O'Donnell at the station, where it has become cause for constant comment and speculation: Which lighthouse? Who is the artist? What shipwreck? Some people just made up their own stories.

The piece, itself, is a photo-print of a 19th-century wood engraving, that much we could tell. Then last December, a small copy of a similar print appeared on ebay identified (at last) as 'Launching the Life- Boat,' by Granville Perkins (1830-1895). Born in Baltimore, Mr Perkins had a flair for the dramatic, no doubt a hold over from his early years as a theater designer, when he created sets for plays such as 'Mazulua', 'The Green Monster' and 'Jacko or the Brazilian Ape'. He later traveled extensively in Latin America. Granville Perkins became known for tropical landscapes, book illustrations, and watercolors.

Poking around on the Internet, Merrycoz.com (a Website providing an index of early American works for Children & Adults, 1789-1872) listed the engraving-by name-as having appeared in *Our Young Folks*, a 19th-c American children's magazine, April 1869. When emailed as to its context, Merrycoz's author, Pat Pflieger, replied the illustration was connected with an article titled 'Wrecks and Wreckers,' by Major Traverse, a generic explanation of wreckers on the American coast. Pat added, 'It's a dandy article... The illustrations probably weren't created specifically for the article, but may have come from the printer's collection... Perkins also seems to have worked for *Harper's Magazine* and for *Frank Leslie's*, both of which were famous for their illustrations... I wonder if your print originally appeared one of those magazines.'

Pat's observation was the missing link. Searching *Harper's Illustrated* for 1868 yielded the original print, 'Among the Wrecker of the New Jersey Coast' by Granville Perkins, and identified the steadfast beacon as Barnegat Light-House. The Custom House now owns the two prints and is pleased to have solved the mural mystery.

New London Maritime Society - Custom House Maritime Museum, 150 Bank Street, New London, Connecticut 06320.

Go to nlmaritimesociety.org & click 'Sentinels on the Sound' for our guide to all summer lighthouse events.



Above, The lighthouse life-saving mural at Union Station, above the heads of Cruise Ship Day volunteers, July 22, 2014.



Above, the Granville Perkins illustration from *Harper's Weekly*, January 1868. You'll notice the wreck is more to the right in this version and the lighthouse at a greater distance. This is the original of the railroad station mural..



Our trips to Ledge Lighthouse leave from New London's City Pier every-other-Saturday. The 2 1/2-hour excursion includes one hour on Ledge Light, where you can view exhibitions and climb up into the lighthouse lantern.

Plum Island Is The Place To Be This Summer

This year our 'Sentinels on the Sound' program is hosting six wonderful boat trips that explore local history and geography. There is one tour, however, inciting intrigue like no other: the day trip to the mysterious Plum Island. The scenic 840-acre island is situated right off of Orient Point and features the Plum Island Animal Disease Center under the supervision of the Department of Homeland Security. Already steeped in secrecy, the island is now causing a new stir as lawmakers strive to protect this ecological treasure. The research base is moving to Kansas and the Federal Government has plans to open it to auction to help compensate for the move. With phrases like "Trump Island" floating around, environmental groups fear for the endangered species and multitude of seals that live on and near the island. All this excitement has caused record sales for the tour, selling out six dates in less than a month! Despite the necessary federal background check and strict cell phone rules, we have people coming from as far and Wisconsin and Florida to explore this hot topic spot. This once in a lifetime experience won't be around for much longer; keep an eye on our calendar to see when or if this chance arises again!

Cody Chase, Connecticut College intern
& 2014 Lighthouse Program Manager



I'm Part of Something BIG Lighthouse Pin

Purchase an *I'm Part of Something BIG* pin at the Custom House Museum Shop for \$10. Pin wearers may partake of the following discounts at businesses in downtown New London on weekends, July through October, 2014.

- Barry's Ice Cream and Candy - 10% off the purchase of Ice Cream or Candy
 - Bean & Leaf - 10% off Purchase
 - Carribean Cuisine In-n-Out - 10% off Purchase
 - Chaplins - 10% off Purchase
 - Copperwood Grill - 25% off Total Purchase of dinner or drinks
 - Custom House Museum Shop - 10% off purchases (not to be combined with other discounts)
 - Daddy Jacks - 10% off Purchase
 - Dickson's Tavern - 3 Headed Pirate Pants cocktail for \$5
 - Flavors of Life - Free small soapstone heart hand carved in Kenya with a \$25 purchase
 - Mangetout - Free cookie or bar with lunch purchase
 - Muddy Waters - Free small coffee with lunch purchase
 - Nearly You Wigs - 20% off Purchase
 - Northern Light Jewelry - 50% off Whale Tail Jewelry
 - Steaming Kettle - 10% off Purchase
 - Studio 33 - free lighthouse car magnet with a purchase of \$20
 - Sweeties Bakery - 10% off Purchase
- with more offers to come, check the website.

Our Plum Island trips are sold out, but you haven't missed the boat. We're hosting a book launch for author **Ruth Ann Bramson's** *A World Unto Itself: The Remarkable History of Plum Island New York*, to be published in August by the Southold Historical Society. The talk is **Sunday, August 24, at 2 PM** at the Custom House. \$12, \$10 members.



John P. Holland: 100th Anniversary Tribute Sunday, August 17 at 2 PM

Join us for a tribute to John P Holland, the Irish-born 'Father of the Modern Submarine', with Jim Gallagher and the John P. Holland Division of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. The talk takes place Sunday, August 17 at 2 PM, at New London Maritime Museum. Refreshments will be served. Get your tickets at www.brownpapertickets.com, search 'submarine'. Admission \$12, \$8 NLMS, AOH members.

In 1875, John P. Holland submitted his first submarine design to the U.S. Navy. It was rejected as folly. Holland approached the Irish-American *Clan na Gael* Fenian organization for financial support. The Fenians funded Holland to build two boats. Additional corporate funding allowed the Holland Torpedo Boat Company to be formed in 1893. In 1899, the Company moved it's operating base to New Suffolk, Long Island, NY, in Peconic Bay. Also, that year Holland's company became a subsidiary of The Electric Boat Company; combined, they became the fore-runners General Dynamics-Electric Boat, Groton, CT. On April 11, 1900, the U.S. Navy purchased Holland Boat #6, designated it the USS Holland (SS-1); it became the Navy's first submarine. An updated Holland design, the A Boat Class, became the first U.S. Navy submarine fleet.



Above: New London's Jibboom Club Parade, held to celebrate the arrival of the *Morgan* in New London, May 31, 2014.

Sentinels on the Sound Lighthouse Boat Schedule - through October 2014

1.) Lighthouse Harbor Tours

every Saturday & Sunday, 11 AM, 12 NOON, 1, 2 & 3PM. \$35. Children ages 6 to 12 \$25.

Book tickets online at www.brownpapertickets.com, search 'New London lighthouse'. Small boat carries six passengers and leaves from the Custom House Pier. For day-of tickets, *only*, call 860-447-2501. Meet at the Custom House 15 minutes prior to departure.

2.) New London Ledge Light Tours

Trips offered every-other Saturday, August 2, 16, 30, September 13, 27. 2:30 PM. 2 1/2-hours. \$35. Children ages 6 to 12 \$25.

Book tickets online at www.brownpapertickets.com, search 'New London lighthouse'. Project 'O' boat carries 50 passengers and leaves from New London's City Pier. Be there 15 minutes before departure.

3.) Night-Time & Full-Moon Lighthouse Tours.

Saturday, August 2, 9, 16 and 23, 9 PM.

4.) Sunset Lighthouse Tours - NEW

August 8, 9, 10, 16 and 23. 7:30 PM. \$35.

Children ages 6 to 12 \$25. Book tickets online at www.brownpapertickets.com, search 'New London lighthouse'. Small boat carries six passengers and leaves from the Custom House Pier. Meet at the Custom House 15 minutes prior to departure.

5.) Plum Island Tours

Friday September 12, Monday September 29, Tuesday October 7, & Thursday October 9. 7 AM to 3 PM. \$35.

Visit a naturally beautiful, historically secretive location. The tour encompasses the entire 840 acre island, including visiting Fort Terry (est. 1897). Lunch is included!

6.) Fishers Island Excursions - NEW

Saturday, August 16, 30. 10 AM to 2 PM. \$60.

Excursion to Fishers Island to view *Coming and Going - A History of Transportation to Fishers Island* exhibition, curated by Pierce Raffertyl at the Henry L. Ferguson Museum, with lunch at the Pequot Inn. Taking the Fishers Island Ferry from New London. \$60. Limited to 15.

Find out first! Sign up for weekly e-mail blasts - write to: nlmaritime@gmail.com

I'M JOINING THE NEW LONDON MARITIME SOCIETY!

Name _____ phone _____ e-mail _____

Street _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Individual \$35__ Family \$50__ Contributor \$100__ Sponsor \$250__ Patron \$1,500__ (This entitles you to Life Membership)

Cash__ Check__ ~ please make payment to New London Maritime Society Visa__ Master Card__ AmEx__

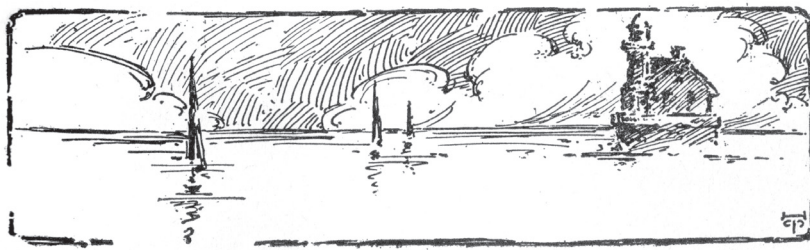
Number _____ Exp. date _____ Security code _____

I want to support the **Ben Martin LIGHTHOUSE FUND** ____ Please accept this donation of \$ _____

Benefits of membership include *free* admission, invitations to special events, discounts, and a newsletter.

150 Bank Street, New London, Connecticut 06320, 860-447-2501





SPECIAL EXHIBITION

Race Rock Light - The history of this legendary lighthouse, curated by Pierce Rafferty, on loan from the Henry L. Ferguson Museum - on view through December, 2014.

left: illustration of Race Rock Light by Helen Clark Perry, from 'The Romance of Labor: Scenes from Good Novels Depicting Joy in Work', Frances Doane Twombly, John Cotton Dana. 1916.

CALENDAR go to www.nlmaritimesociety.org for **more** events & the latest updates

AUGUST

Saturday, August 9, Nimble Arts Circus juggling workshop, 2 PM, fee \$15. Learn to juggle from real clowns. Call 860-447-2501.

Saturday, August 9, Nimble Arts Circus is back with new acts for 2014! **FREE** performances at **4 & 6:30 PM** on Parade Plaza. Sponsored by New London Water Authority, DNLA, City of New London, & New London Maritime Society.

Sunday, August 17 at 2 PM, join us for the **John P. Holland 100th Anniversary Tribute**, presented by **Jim Gallagher**. **John P. Holland is the Irish-born 'Father of the Modern Submarine'**. Admission \$12, NLMS & AOH members and **BIG** pin wearers \$8. Space limited, please call to reserve your place: 860-447-2501.

Sunday, August 24 at 2 PM, book launch for author **Ruth Ann Bramson's** *A World Unto Itself: The Remarkable History of Plum Island New York*. Tickets are **\$12**, or **\$10** for NLMS members and **BIG** pin wearers. **Purchase your ticket at the door.**

Monday-Tuesday, August 25-26 Commemoration of the 175 Anniversary of the Amistad arrival in New London. In partnership with Hempsted Houses and the Freedom Schooner Amistad. Watch the Website for details: nlmaritimesociety.org.

Thursday July 31 at 6:30 PM Created Equal: America's Civil Rights Struggle: SLAVERY BY ANOTHER NAME (film) & discussion with Lonnie Braxton. Created Equal: America's Civil Rights Struggle is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities that uses the power of documentary films to encourage community discussion of America's civil rights history. NEH has partnered with the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History to develop programmatic and support materials for the sites. New London Maritime Society's program at Public Library of New London is one of 473 institutions across the country awarded a set of four films chronicling the history of the Civil Rights Movement. All events are **FREE** and open to the public and held at Public Library of New London.

Freedom Riders (film) - Thursday, September 25

The Loving Story (film) - Thursday, October 30

THE GILDER LEHRMAN
INSTITUTE of AMERICAN HISTORY



Sunday, September 14, 2 PM - 2014 is the 225th Anniversary of the US Customs Service!

Save this date for a special program to celebrate US Customs' history. **FREE.**

Below: Detail *New London Harbor Light*, glass plate print, ca. 1915. collection New London Maritime Society.



New London Maritime Society
Custom House Maritime Museum

150 Bank Street
New London, Connecticut 06320

www.nlmaritimesociety.org



'Best Lighthouse Tour'
Yankee Magazine